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ACTION DS-00

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO	LOG-00	MFA-00	NP-00	A-00	CIAE-00	INL-00	WHA-00
	UTED-00	OBO-00	TEDE-00	LAB-01	L-00	DCP-01	OCS-03
	PM-00	IRM-00	SS-00	TEST-00	ASDS-01	PMB-00	DSCC-00
	DRL-02	SAS-00	/008W				

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R 092125Z AUG 02
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7154

UNCLAS CARACAS 002366

DEPT FOR DS/OP/WHA
DEPT ALSO FOR S/S-O/DS, DS/DSS/OSAC, DS/DSS/ITA,
DS/PSP/DEAV, CA/ACS/WHA, WHA/AND

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ASEC, VE
SUBJECT: EMERGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING - 08/09/02

REF: CARACAS 2257

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

1. (SBU) POST CONVENED A MEETING OF THE EMERGENCY ACTION COMMITTEE (EAC) CORE GROUP ON 08/09/02 TO EVALUATE ONGOING VIOLENCE IN DOWNTOWN CARACAS. THE EAC LAST MET ON 08/02/02 FOR THE SAME REASONS (SEE REFTEL). DUE TO A SECOND INCIDENT OF GUNFIRE AIMED AT THE POLICIA METROPOLITANA ON
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08/08/02, AND SCHEDULED RALLIES SET FOR THIS WEEKEND, THE EAC DISCUSSED THE POTENTIAL FOR MORE CIVIL UNREST. THIS LATEST ROUND OF VIOLENCE WAS INFLUENCED BY THE SUPREME COURT'S SECOND DECISION NOT TO PLACE CHARGES AGAINST MILITARY OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE APRIL EVENTS IN WHICH PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ WAS BRIEFLY DEPOSED. THE EAC AGREED ON STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF HARM TO US EMBASSY PERSONNEL.

2. (SBU) THE CONSENSUS OF THE EAC IS THAT THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE HAS GROWN WORSE. ON FRIDAY 08/02/02, POLICIA

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: NORMAN M BOUTON
DATE/CASE ID: 16 NOV 2004 200400113

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METROPOLITANA (PM) WERE PINNED DOWN BY SNIPERS ARMED WITH 7.62 CALIBER ASSAULT RIFLES. ON THURSDAY 08/08/02, ANOTHER GROUP OF PM OFFICERS WERE THE TARGETS OF GUNFIRE BY PRO-GOVERNMENT ELEMENTS. IN ALL SOME FIFTEEN PEOPLE WERE REPORTEDLY HURT, TWO OF WHICH WERE PM OFFICERS. ONE OFFICER WAS SHOT IN THE LEG AND ANOTHER WAS STRUCK IN THE CHEST. FORTUNATELY, THE SECOND OFFICER WAS WEARING A BALLISTIC VEST AND THE INJURY WAS NOT LIFE THREATENING.

3. (SBU) THE EAC CONSIDERED THE THREAT TO US EMBASSY PERSONNEL TO BE REMOTE, BUT AGREED THAT THE LEVEL OF ANTI-AMERICAN RHETORIC EMANATING FROM RADICAL PRO-GOVERNMENT GROUPS IS INCREASING. SECURITY OF THE US EMBASSY, AN INMAN-DESIGN BUILDING, LOCATED SEVERAL MILES FROM THE SCENE OF RECENT VIOLENCE, WAS ADJUDGED TO BE ADEQUATE. THE EAC DISCUSSED THE NEED TO COMMUNICATE DIRECTLY WITH THE GOV, BY DIPLOMATIC NOTE IF NECESSARY, REQUESTS FOR IMMEDIATE HOST COUNTRY SECURITY RESOURCES IF THE SITUATION DICTATED. AT PRESENT, POLICE SUPPORT OF THE CHANCERY AND CMR WERE DEEMED AS SUFFICIENT. RSO MET ON 08/08/02 WITH BARUTA POLICE,

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RESPONSIBLE FOR THE AREA IN WHICH THE CHANCERY AND MAJORITY OF EMBASSY EMPLOYEES RESIDE AND REACHED ASSURANCES OF CONTINUED FREQUENT PATROL AND RESPONSE TO EMBASSY COMMUNITY NEEDS.

4. (SBU) THE EAC DETERMINED THAT AN ADDITIONAL WARDEN ANNOUNCEMENT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE 25,000 US CITIZEN COMMUNITY IN VENEZUELA. FOR THE EMBASSY COMMUNITY, A NEW TELEPHONIC AUTO-DIALING WARDEN SYSTEM WILL BE ACTIVATED OVER THE WEEKEND TO ENSURE INSTRUCTIONAL MESSAGES ARE PASSED TO STAFF AND FAMILY MEMBERS ASKING THEM TO AVOID CERTAIN AREAS OF DOWNTOWN CARACAS.

5. (U) POINT OF CONTACT FOR THIS MATTER IS RSO JOHN DAVIS, IVG: 643-2403, COMMERCIAL/STU-III: 58-212-975-8925, OR BY E-MAIL.

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